



Tuesday, October 21, 2008

Southern California Invites You to Catch Your Big Break!

“Welcome, relax, and enjoy!” That is how southern California native Mike McCann is greeting fellow veterans from around the country this week. With the wonderful year-round weather and numerous fun-filled attractions of Riverside, it is no wonder the city was selected to host the 2008 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Situated just southwest of Hollywood, the entertainment capital of the world, Riverside and the surrounding areas provide rich and diverse events such as college football, fine art at the Getty Museum, music at the Hollywood Bowl, and family entertainment at Disneyland and Universal studios – in addition to the dynamic film and television industry. If that is not enough, McCann asks, “Where else can you go snow skiing in the morning and surfing in the afternoon?”



Mike McCann of Redondo Beach rehearses at the 2007 Festival.



Jim Sterrett-Bryant of Palmdale performs at the 2007 Festival.

McCann, an Army veteran who lives in Redondo Beach, will again showcase his talents in this year's show, his fifth consecutive year at the Festival.

Another area veteran is Jim Sterrett-Bryant of Palmdale, also a long time participant who invites our visiting veterans to seek him out for “...a warm handshake or

a big hug.” A Bay area resident, Sterrett-Bryant loves his home state's reputation for letting its citizens set their own pace for their lifestyles – from quick and frantic, to slow and laid back. He believes that California has something for everyone.

McCann, Bryant, their fellow California veterans and the whole VA Loma Linda Healthcare System staff and volunteers all say, “Break a leg” – and have a terrific time at this year's Creative Arts Festival!

Four Artists Selected for Journal Cover

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development (JRRD) is honoring four participants of the 2008 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival by featuring their artwork on its 2009 covers. The selected

artwork was chosen from hundreds of entries submitted to the journal for judging.

The winners will be recognized at this week's Festival in Riverside. The first artist, John Powell, who is a disabled Army veteran from Balch Springs, Texas, is being acknowledged for his self-portrait, “Wanna Race?” Inspired by a poster of a Paralympic athlete that hangs in his home, Powell recreated the poster depicting a wheelchair racer, using himself as the model.

In addition to being an award-winning artist, Powell is also a medal-winning athlete. He is brain injured and uses a wheelchair



“Wanna Race?” by John Powell

to compete in several sports including power soccer, slalom, air guns and softball. Powell is unable to attend the Festival this week as he is competing in the wheelchair curling trials for the 2010 Paralympics.

David Primrose, a medical technologist at the Northern Arizona VA Health Care System and Air Force veteran, will also be featured with his gold-medal winning digital photograph “The Wave,” showcasing the early morning beauty of the Arizona landscape. Primrose began practicing photography in the early

1980s as a form of escape from the pressures of working, and en-

See “JRRD,” cont'd on page 6

Stars of the Stage

Breathing – Not Just for Singers!

Your breath is the most important part of singing. It's the fuel for your instrument. In addition to singing better, these breathing exercises can help calm you, lower your heart rate and blood pressure. So even if you're not a singer, read on! Stand with your feet about shoulder width apart, or sit towards the front of your chair, evenly on both your "sit-bones." Your shoulders should be relaxed and down, not stiff or pulled back. Keep your chest high and proud, not slumped over. Try to make the most space between the bottom of your ribcage and your waistline. Keep your head comfortably level, not pointing up and not with your chin down towards your chest. Imagine a string from the top of your head lifting it up, lengthening your neck and spine.

Ok, now you're ready to breathe! Most of us breathe quite shallowly, using only a small portion of our capacity. It takes

some conscious effort to breathe well, so here we go! As you take in a nice, deep breath, feel your stomach, ribcage and small of your back all expand. Imagine this space as a big balloon, filling up with water; it fills and expands the bottom first, and makes more room inside your ribcage. A mistake many people make when trying to breathe deeply is to raise their shoulders. This only creates tension in the shoulders and prevents you from breathing deeply.

A trick to help you feel how much you can expand when you breathe in is to completely exhale all the air in your lungs first. Push out everything you can (without letting your chest or posture slump), and then push out some more air. Hold that vacuum for a few seconds. Then, open your mouth and just let the air rush in. Amazed? That's how much air should be coming in each time you breathe to sing or take a couple of nice, deep breaths to help you relax.



Don't Miss the Artist Interaction Session Today!

One of the highlights of Festival week is the Artist Interaction Session. The interactive program allows our visual artists to display their awarding winning pieces and share details about their work – their inspiration, conception, creative process and what the piece means to them.

The session is open to the public, family, friends, volunteers and VA staff as a way for them to appreciate the artwork and get to know a little more about the artists who created each piece. Local media are invited to attend the session as well and to participate during the artists' early morning photo sessions.

Prior to the Artist Interaction Session, visual artists will assemble with their artwork for photos. Teams I and II will report to Riverside Convention Center (RCC) East Foyer at 8:30 a.m. for photos. Teams III and IV will come to the East Foyer at 9 a.m. for theirs.

The Artist Interaction Session begins at 10 a.m. on the first floor of the convention center in the Magnolia North and South rooms. A formal slide and oral presentation will allow each artist the opportunity to spend a few minutes describing their work to those in attendance. Don't miss this opportunity to interact with our talented award-winning visual artists. The session ends at noon.

Stars of the Studio

Watercolor Painting Tips...

When you think of watercolor painting, do you remember the kits you got as a child – the ones that came with six colors and a paintbrush and cost about a dollar? Or, do you think of the famous Impressionist watercolor paintings of the early 20th century? Some of the participants in today's art workshop will be experienced watercolor artists while others may be picking up the paintbrush for the first time. If you fall into the latter category, here are a few things to remember before you begin.

1. While watercolor paint is transparent, opaqueness can be achieved by controlling the amount of water on your brush. Remember, more water means a lighter color, and conversely, less water results in a darker color.

2. To achieve whites, you will have to use the white of the paper.

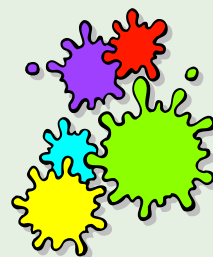
3. To implement the wet on wet technique, dampen the paper first then apply paint. The paint will spread with less control from the painter.

4. A splatter effect can be achieved by flicking paint off the end of the brush. A toothbrush can be used for greater splatter effect.

5. Try dropping sea salt on wet paint. You'll achieve some interesting results.

6. A nice effect is to 'block' your paper by taping it uniformly around the edges. This will help the paper dry evenly without warping.

7. Drawing with candle wax, crayons or oil-based sticks, and then painting over it creates unique results.



California

The Golden State



newly-arrived were Americans, the gold rush attracted thou-

Ever wonder why California is called the Golden State? "The Golden State" has long been a popular designation for California and was made the official state nickname in 1968.

The first and most popular explanation for the nickname is the California gold rush (1848–1855), which began on January 24, 1848, when gold was discovered by James Marshall at Sutter's Mill in Coloma. News of the discovery soon spread, resulting in some 300,000 flooding the state.

The early gold-seekers, called "forty-niners," traveled to California by ships and covered wagons, often facing substantial hardships along the way. While most of the



sands from Latin America, Europe, Australia and Asia. At first, prospectors retrieved gold from streams and riverbeds using simple techniques, such as panning, but later they developed more sophisticated methods of gold recovery. Those which recovered gold enjoyed great wealth, but the majority returned home with little more than they started with.

A second reason for the state's nickname is the golden poppy which is native to the state.

The poppy has a silky texture with four petals and blooms in yellow and orange colors from February to September.

Thirdly, California is also a major producer of citrus crops. The California citrus industry ranks second in the United States, after Florida. California's total citrus production averaged 3.2 million tons per season over the past three seasons. While California produces 24 percent of the nation's oranges, its crop accounts for 80 percent of those going to the fresh-market.

Reason number four? The University of California, Berkeley adopted gold and blue as their school colors 1875. Blue represents the sky and gold represents the precious metal found by forty-niners in the state's hills. Secretary of State Frank M. Jordan suggested making blue and gold the official state colors and in 1951, legislation was passed to that affect.

There you go – four good reasons why California truly is the Golden State.



Hometown News at the Festival

The Hometown News program at VA's national events is a public affairs initiative that provides a news release to the local newspapers of the participants. It lets them know about your attendance this year, and the category of your talent. At the Festival, all news releases are placed on our Festival Web site for any veterans requesting one. We also notify local media across the country by phone and e-mail to tell them that a veteran from their reading area is here.

If your phone number is listed on your news release, you may get a phone call from your local newspaper when you get home requesting an interview about the Festival. If you did not list your phone number and a local reporter contacts us and wants to interview you, we will provide your phone number so they may call you directly, but we will not put it on our Web site.

The Hometown News program is a wonderful way to let your communities know about their local veterans' star status! It is

also a very good way to tell other talented veterans about VA's creative arts program and other services that may be available to them at the nearest VA medical center. We hope to have all of this year's news releases posted on the Web site by Thursday (see www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov under "Participant Information").

We will also be taking many photos while you are rehearsing or displaying your artwork, and hope to have the best photos on the Web site toward the end of the week. We will provide one 4"x6" print of that photo for you and a copy of your news release.

Thank you for letting us tell the story of your talents, achievements and participation in the 2008 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival!



Chainsaw Art Demo

Today, you'll get the chance to view a very unique type of art using a common power tool – specifically, a chainsaw. Carvers can use chainsaws as a very valuable tool when sculpting with wood. Jerry Stringham, a local artist, will lead today's demonstration. Stringham uses wood, stone and metal in his sculptures and plans to sculpt a bear for us in the demonstration today. The lesson will take place at the local VFW Post in Phelan, Calif. Artists should plan to board the buses for the tour at 12:45 p.m. in front of the Marriott Hotel. Buses will depart at 1 p.m. for the Phelan VFW.

Festival Photos



Ladies with the American Legion Auxiliary work their booth during the Festival registration on Monday.



Veterans Canteen Service staff hand out materials to a Festival registrant.



George Rowan from Oakland, Calif. entertains the staff and veterans during registration.



Judy and veteran Percy (Jim) Trudeau from Cheyenne, Wyo., sign up for the Veterans History Project.



Herbert Christopher from Columbia, S.C., gets his registration photo taken on Monday.





Loma Linda VA Healthcare System volunteer Dennis Van De Car assists veteran Virgil Icban from Suisan City, Calif., get off the bus.



Host Coordinator Annie Tuttle shows Robert Lewis from San Diego, Calif., how great his new shirt looks!



Doug Oldfield from Prescott Ariz., walks with registration on Monday.



Veteran Jay Braun and his wife Patricia from Bay Pines, Fla., complete his registration.



Leo Bailey from Martinez, Calif., steps off the bus as he arrives at the Marriott.



Auditions Take Place Today!



This year's show is bound to be more enjoyable the more you participate. Please take the opportunity to audition for one of these extra parts in Sunday's show. The following is a list of narrators, soloists and actors needed for a variety of parts this year:

Narrators

- Four narrators to read "Yesterday a Veteran Died."
- One narrator to read "American of African Descent."

Actors with speaking parts

- Hollywood Costumes
- Bo Derek Introduction

Non-Speaking Acting Parts

- Six flag bearers to carry in the five service flags and the American flag in the production number, "A Salute to American Service."
- Hollywood Costumes

Vocal Solos

- Three vocal soloists for production number, "Fifty Thousand Names."
- One vocal soloist to sing the song, "Singing in the Rain" for another veteran's dance act.
- Vocal soloists or small ensemble for production number, "From Where I Stand."

Small Ensembles

- One small group ensemble to sing on the production number, "Star Spangled Banner."
- Small ensemble for "From Where I Stand."

Sign-up for auditions and rehearsals for solos and narrations will be held today from 1-2 p.m. in the Riverside Convention Center in the following rooms:

- De Anza North (main floor) – Small ensemble for "Star Spangled Banner" and "Singing in the Rain" solo.
- University West (second floor) – Small ensembles and vocal solos for "From Where I Stand" and vocal solos for "Fifty Thousand Names."
- Aviators (second floor) – Narrations and flags.

Audition forms MUST be completed and turned in at this time. Beginning at 7:30 p.m., one person or small group who have turned in an audition form will be called out of the chorus rehearsals to audition for their desired solos, narrations or small ensembles in the Aviators room on the second floor.

The names of those selected for solos, narrations and other roles will be posted early tomorrow morning.



Visual Arts Display for Performers

Performers! Our visual artists have their winning artwork on display in the RCC East Foyer. It is truly something you don't want to miss. Come see the outstanding artwork during your free time today.

"JRRD," cont'd from page 1



"The Wave" by David Primrose

joys the genre because each landscape is viewed differently by every individual.

"Photography is often a reflection of the person taking the picture," said Primrose. "The particular beauty or effect can be, and often is, unique to the individual doing the photo."

Allen Eckman's "Traditional Dancer" is the first sculpture to appear on the journal's cover. After serving in Vietnam for four years in the Marine Corps, followed by a career in advertising, Eckman decided to pursue an independent career in fine art,



"Traditional Dancer" by Allen Eckman

using a medium of cast paper sculpture he developed himself. In the Black Hills of South Dakota, Eckman uses sculpture both as therapy for his post-traumatic stress disorder and to instill art appreciation in others through sculpture teaching kits.

"My art has changed my life," said Eckman. "It has become a way of life for me. I can put my whole self into it and focus on just one thing, which is very therapeutic."

The oil painting of Benjamin F. Snider, an

Army veteran from Grand Junction, Colo., will also be featured. The piece is called, "One Morning in December." Painting is his cure for winter cabin fever, and the inspiration for this piece came from his early morning drives into the mountains. Snider began painting while stationed in Germany under the tutelage of an elderly German at the service club.

"I've always had a passion for art," said Snider. "I dream of the day I can retire and just become tired from painting."



"One Morning in December" by Benjamin F. Snider

The JRRD cover artists submissions will be on display at the Festival, starting with Eckman's sculpture and Primrose's photograph today in the East Foyer of the Riverside Convention Center, and then again in that same location on Sunday, October 26. Snider and Powell's artwork pieces will be displayed in the West Foyer

lobby. Stacie Yuhasz and Nick Lancaster from JRRD will have an exhibit there, as well as a power point presentation featuring past cover winning artwork by veterans beginning today.

Congratulations to each of the four artists whose beautiful artwork will appear on the upcoming JRRD covers.



The **Medical Suite** is located in the **Marriot Hotel, Room 901 & 902**.

Hours of Operation: 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The Medical Suite phone number if you are calling **inside** the Hotel is **extension 7901**. **Outside** of the Hotel, call **(951) 784-8000** and ask for the **Room 901**.

Participants should inform their team leader(s) of any medical concerns, and the team leaders will then assist with contacting the Medical Room.

Medical personnel will accompany veterans and support personnel on all trips away from the hotel.

The **Hospitality Suite** is located in the **Marriott Hotel, Suite 1228** and is open today for your convenience. The only meal being served today is the opening banquet at 7 p.m., but the wonderful volunteers in the hospitality suite have snacks and drinks available if you need something before then – along with a lot of welcoming smiles!

Hours of operation for the week of the Festival are as follows:

Tuesday, October 21	9 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Wednesday, October 22	9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Thursday, October 23	9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Friday, October 24	9 a.m. to Midnight
Saturday, October 25	9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4 to 6:30 p.m.
Sunday, October 26	10 a.m. to Noon



Military Combat Experience Presentations

The artwork submitted this year by veterans who experienced combat duty during World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, the Gulf War, or current combat operations will be presented tonight from 7:30 to 9 p.m. in the Riverside Convention Center Magnolia Room on the first floor.

The artwork, using fine or applied art media, relates to each veteran's personal experience in that war or conflict. A narrative explaining how the art relates to the veteran's wartime experience, composed by the veteran or his VA therapist, will be read as the images are shared with the audience. This is always a moving presentation with many a story to tell, so please stop in.



Daily Menu

Tuesday, October 21, 2008

Meals will be served in Raincross Ballroom in the RCC unless otherwise designated.

Breakfast: 7 - 8:30 a.m.

Lunch: Noon - 1 p.m.

Dinner: 5:30 - 7 p.m.

Breakfast - Country Buffet

Fluffy Scrambled Eggs; Bacon and Sausage; Biscuits and Gravy; Breakfast Potatoes; Oatmeal and Dry Cereals; Individual Yogurts; Orange Juice, Apple Juice & Tomato Juice; Milk (Soy Milk is available upon request); Coffee, Hot Tea

Lunch - Asian Fare Buffet

Broccoli Raisin Peanut Salad; Oriental Cole Slaw; Thai Noodle Pasta Salad; Orange Chicken; Broccoli Beef; Fried Rice; Vegetable Chow Mein; Fortune Cookies and Almond Cookies; Coffee, Hot Tea and Iced Tea

Dinner - Thanksgiving Fare Buffet

Roasted Turkey; Mashed Potatoes; Dressing; Squash; Cheese Manicotti; Cranberry Sauce; Rolls and Butter; Pumpkin Mousse Pie and Apple Pie; Coffee, Hot Tea & Iced Tea



Veterans History Project (VHP) Interviews will take place all week (through Saturday) in the VHP taping room (in the University Room on the

first floor of the Marriott Hotel). Artists, performers and veteran staff members or volunteers may be interviewed today, from 8 a.m. – noon and again from 1 – 5 p.m. Take advantage of your free time and sign up for your interview with Steve Hollingshead in the VHP taping room. This historic project honors our nation's veterans by creating a lasting legacy of their military experience. Regardless of branch or period of service, age, military career or experience, all veterans are invited to share it with our VHP program staff this week at the Festival and help make history!

Veterans' interviews will be taped and given to the Library of Congress. Each participant will also receive a DVD copy of their interview and a VHP Challenge Coin. Interviews will take place through Saturday at the same times and location. Sign up soon!

Tuesday, October 21

Star Artists

Star Performers

7 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast – RCC Raincross Ballroom, 1st floor
7:30 – 8:30 a.m.	Late Registration – RCC Citrus Heritage & Arlington, 2nd Floor
9 a.m. – 11 p.m.	Hospitality Room Open at Marriott Hotel – Suite 1228
8:30 a.m.	Teams I and II report to RCC East Foyer for photos
9 a.m.	Teams III and IV report to RCC East Foyer for photos
10 a.m.	Artist Interaction Session begins – RCC Magnolia North and South, 1st floor
Noon – 12:45 p.m.	Lunch – RCC Raincross Ballroom
12:45 p.m.	Board buses for tour: Chainsaw Art VFW Phelan
1 p.m.	Buses depart for tour
2 – 4:30 p.m.	Chainsaw art demonstration
4:30 p.m.	Board buses and return to hotel
5:30 – 7 p.m.	Dinner – RCC Raincross Ballroom
7:30 – 9 p.m.	Presentation of the Military Combat Experience entries (electronic images) from the 2008 national art competition – RCC Magnolia North & South, 1st floor
9 – 11 p.m.	Karaoke & Social time at Marriott Hotel, Orangecrest Room

7 – 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast – RCC Raincross Ballroom, 1st floor
7:30 – 8:30 a.m.	Late Registration – RCC Citrus Heritage & Arlington, 2nd floor
8 – 8:30 a.m.	Check in with team leaders – RCC Ben Lewis Hall
8:30 – 9 a.m.	Introductions and announcements for ALL stage performers and staff – RCC Ben Lewis Hall
9 a.m. – Noon	Act I rehearsal, including blocking, for individual numbers AND chorus numbers. All veterans and staff needed – RCC Ben Lewis Hall
9 a.m. – Noon	Chorus vests/costume fittings – RCC Aviators West, 2nd floor
9 a.m.–11 p.m.	Hospitality Room Open at Marriott Hotel – Suite 1228
Noon – 1 p.m.	Lunch – RCC Raincross Ballroom
1 – 2 p.m.	All individual acts have pictures taken IN COSTUMES – (lighting crew present) – RCC Ben Lewis Hall
1 – 2 p.m.	Rehearsal and sign up for audition solos and narration as scheduled – RCC De Anza North, University, Aviators
1 – 5 p.m.	Chorus vests/costume fittings – RCC Aviators West, 2nd floor
2 – 5 p.m.	Chorus music rehearsal with Gary/Jerry & sectional assistants (ALL participants must participate in these rehearsals when not needed in Main Rehearsal Room) – Work on audition pieces if time – RCC De Anza North
2:15 – 5 p.m.	Act II rehearsal, including blocking, for individual numbers AND Chorus Numbers – All veterans and staff needed – RCC Ben Lewis Hall
5:30 – 6:45 p.m.	Dinner – RCC Raincross Ballroom
7 – 9 p.m.	Chorus number rehearsal with music director (All show participants) – RCC Ben Lewis Hall
7 – 9 p.m.	Chorus vests/costume fittings – RCC Aviators West, 2nd floor
7:30 p.m. –	Auditions for solos and narrations – one person or small group at a time will be called out of chorus number rehearsal – RCC Aviators East, 2nd Floor
9 – 11 p.m.	Karaoke & Social time at Marriott Hotel, Orangecrest Room

Internet Cafe

Where: Northeast Foyer
Riverside Convention Center

When: Tuesday, October 21 -
Saturday, October 25

Hours: 7 - 8:30 a.m.
11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
7 - 9 p.m.
(Not open Thursday
or Saturday evening)



Provided by Hewlett Packard



Weather for October:
Average low - 53°
Average high - 83°
Average of .26 inches
of rain for the month

Today's Weather
Low - 54°
High - 92°
Sunny and bright!

Please check with your team leader and/or the posted schedule outside of Ben Lewis Hall for any changes or updates to your daily schedule.

NVCAF WEB SITE
www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov

Tell your friends and family back home to log onto the Festival Web site to track all the exciting things happening at the Festival this week. There they will be able to check out the daily editions of the *ARTSGRAM* (on the main home page) as well as individual news releases and photos, located on the "Participant Information" tab. Information will be updated through Sunday morning.